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NorthWestern Energy

Mountain States Transmission Intertie *ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT*

APPENDIX G PUBLIC AND AGENCY SCOPING SUMMARY REPORT

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112100

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

This Scoping Summary Report has been prepared as part of NorthWestern Energy's (NorthWestern) application to the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) for certification of the proposed Mountain States Transmission Intertie (MSTI) project under the Montana Major Facility Siting Act (MFSA).

The scoping process described in this report has been developed primarily to ensure compliance with MFSA. However, because the proposed project will ultimately require compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA), the process was also designed to be consistent with the scoping requirements of those laws. MDEQ is also the lead agency for compliance with MEPA; the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is the lead federal agency for NEPA compliance.

This report includes:

- A brief overview of the proposed project; purpose and need for the MSTI project; and a short summary of agency roles (Chapter 1).
- A description of scoping activities, including press releases, newsletters, mailings, a website, public open house meetings, elected official briefings, agency meetings, and tribal consultation (Chapter 2).
- A summary of the comments received during the scoping process to date (Chapter 3).
- An analysis of the issues raised during scoping (Chapter 4).

Exhibits include:

- An example of the agency scoping letter sent by NorthWestern (Exhibit 1).
- A list of agencies that received the agency scoping letter (Exhibit 2).
- Questions and comments received during briefings of elected officials (Exhibit 3).
- Comments received from federal, state, and local agencies (Exhibit 4).
- Legal notices published before each Public Open House (Exhibit 5).
- The project fact sheet (Exhibit 6).
- Photocopies of the Public Open House sign-in sheets (Exhibit 7).
- Copies of presentation boards used at Public Open House meetings (Exhibit 8).
- Written comments received, including a petition submitted by residents of Hadley Park in Jefferson County, Montana (Exhibit 9).
- The *MSTI Project Update* newsletter (Exhibit 10).
- The project mailing list (Exhibit 11).

1.1 PROJECT OVERVIEW

NorthWestern Energy (NorthWestern) proposes to construct, operate and maintain the MSTI 500kV transmission line to address the requests for transmission service from customers and relieve constraints on the high-voltage transmission system in the region. The new transmission line would begin at Townsend Substation which would be constructed in southwestern Montana about five miles

south of Townsend, Montana, east of U.S. Highway 287 (US 287) in Broadwater County. The line would proceed south into southeastern Idaho connecting to Idaho Power Company's (IPCO) existing Midpoint Substation, 12 miles northeast of Jerome, Idaho. Figure 1.1-1 shows the substation locations and the alternative routes being considered.

The major project components of the proposed action include the 500kV alternating current (AC) transmission line, a new Townsend Substation; construction of a new facility next to the existing Mill Creek Substation near Anaconda, Montana for the installation of a bank of phase shifting transformers and modifications to the existing Midpoint Substation in Idaho. Brief descriptions of the major project components are presented in the following sections.

1.1.1 NEW 500kV TRANSMISSION LINE

The MSTI 500kV AC transmission line would interconnect the new Townsend Substation with IPCO's existing Midpoint Substation. The MSTI 500kV transmission line would be between 400 and 430 miles long.

Various alternative route links have been identified as part of the siting study for the transmission line. During the route selection process, some of these alternative route links were combined into a limited number of end-to-end route and subroute alternatives. A preferred route was selected based on environmental and other considerations. Alternative route links, shown in Figure 1.1-1, cross Silver Bow, Jefferson, Broadwater, Deer Lodge, Beaverhead, and Madison counties in southwestern Montana, and Clark, Jefferson, Blaine, Butte, Bingham, Bonneville Power, Minidoka, Lincoln, and Jerome counties in southeastern Idaho. The links cross private, state (Idaho and Montana) and federal (primarily Bureau of Land Management [BLM] and U.S Forest Service [USFS]) land. There are a total of 1,150 miles of alternative route links, 582 miles in Montana and 568 miles in Idaho.

The MSTI 500kV transmission would be constructed mainly on guyed V steel lattice structures approximately 125 feet high. Less frequently, self-supporting steel lattice structures or self-supporting tubular steel structures approximately 125 feet high would be used. The guyed V structure would be used for most tangent segments of the line. Self-supporting steel lattice structures would be used in mountainous areas and at points where a line changes direction or terminates. Tubular steel monopoles may be used in areas of narrow right-of-way or where permanent land disturbance or the amount of land required for the structure must be minimized (e.g., agricultural land, developed and urban land, and some river and perennial stream crossings). The land permanently required for the structures would vary depending on structure type and terrain, ranging from 100 square feet for steel monopoles to 22,500 square feet for the guyed V structures. An area of approximately 200 by 200 feet (0.9 acre) per structure may be temporarily disturbed during construction.

The required right-of-way width is 220 feet and the average span length between the transmission structures would be approximately 1,400 feet (4 per mile) for the guyed V structures, 1,200 feet (4 per mile) for the self-supporting steel lattice structures, and 900 feet (6 per mile) for the self-supporting tubular steel monopole structures.

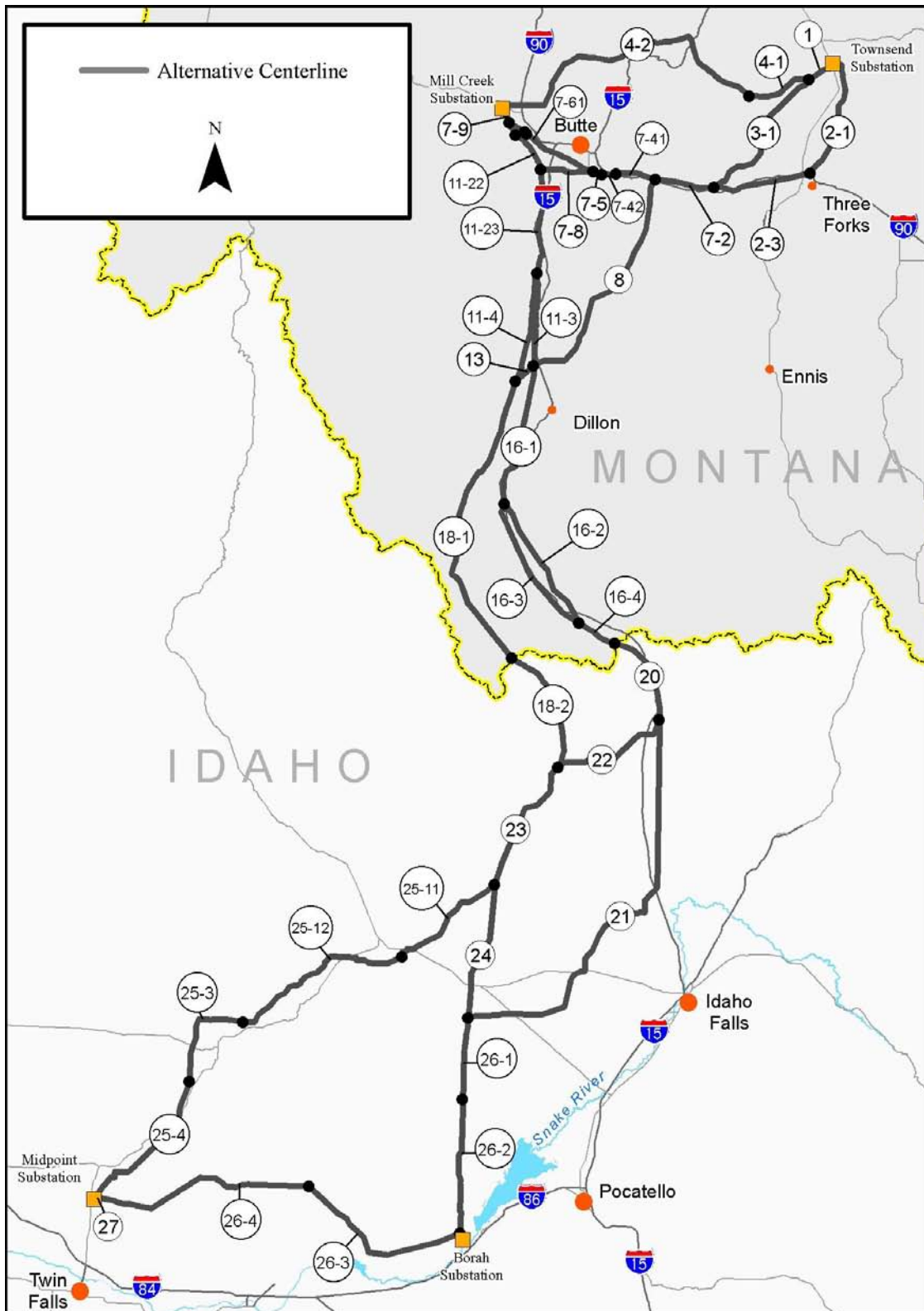


Figure 1.1-1 Alternative Route Links and Substation Locations, Montana and Idaho

Access along the transmission line right-of-way would include using existing improved roads, using existing roads that require improvement, and building new roads in flat, sloping, steep, or very steep terrain. Permanent new roads would be graded to a travel service width of 14 feet.

In addition, during construction of the transmission line there would be temporary pulling and tensioning sites, material staging sites, and concrete batch plants.

1.1.2 NEW TOWNSEND SUBSTATION

The new Townsend 500kV substation would be located in southwestern Montana, five miles south of Townsend, Montana, east of US 287 in Broadwater County, Montana. The current land use of the site is center-pivot irrigation. The parcel contains agricultural outbuildings and a residence, located about 1,030-feet south of the substation site. Adjacent land use is a mixture of center-pivot irrigation and pasture. The total size of the Townsend Substation site would be approximately 52 acres.

1.1.3 MILL CREEK SUBSTATION

A new facility would be built adjacent to NorthWestern's existing Mill Creek Substation, located approximately three miles south of Anaconda, Montana. The proposed facility would be built to accommodate a bank of phase shifting transformers and other series capacitor banks and associated substation equipment. The MSTI 500kV line would not connect directly to or require modification of the existing substation. Engineering studies will be completed to determine the final layout of this new facility.

1.1.4 MIDPOINT SUBSTATION MODIFICATIONS

IPCO's existing Midpoint Substation located 10 miles north of Interstate 84 (I-84) in Jerome County, Idaho would be modified to accommodate the new MSTI 500kV transmission line. Engineering studies with IPCO will be completed to determine the ultimate modifications required at the Midpoint substation.

1.2 PURPOSE AND NEED

The following purpose and need statement for the proposed MSTI 500kV transmission line will be considered when identifying and evaluating the Preferred Route and alternative routes that would accomplish the goals of the proposed action. The route selection process was completed in May 2008. MSTI's purpose and need include:

- Responding to customer requests for new transmission capacity;
- Strengthening the Western Power Grid;
- Relieving congestion on the existing facilities identified in the Department of Energy's (DOE) 2006 Congestion Study;
- Improving transmission system reliability by creating additional operating flexibility;
- Meeting the growing demand for electricity and economic development of the region;
- Providing energy diversification, bi-directional transmission capacity, market competition, and supplier choice to the region;

- Creating positive economic impact along the corridor, including job opportunities, renewable energy development, and opportunities for competitive energy markets in Montana and Idaho; and
- Increasing the local tax base.

Chapter 1.0 in Volume I of the MFSA application contains a more thorough discussion of purpose and need.

1.3 AGENCY JURISDICTION, ROLES, AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This Scoping Summary Report has been prepared as part of NorthWestern's application to the MDEQ for certification of the proposed MSTI project under MFSA. The MFSA application must be prepared and accepted as complete prior to the start of the MEPA compliance process. MFSA requires that the application be prepared according to substantive standards outlined in the Administrative Rules of Montana (see also Circular MFSA-2), and public scoping is normally required to meet MFSA requirements.

Eventually, because the alternative selected for this project will cross federal, state, and private lands in Montana and Idaho, various agencies will be involved with ensuring the proposed action's compliance with other laws and regulations. In addition to MFSA, MDEQ is the lead agency for compliance with MEPA. There are no laws resembling MFSA or MEPA in Idaho. Land-holding state agencies with lands within the MSTI study area include the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (MDNRC), Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks (MFWP), and Idaho Department of Lands (IDL). Federal land-holding agencies that could be affected by one or more alternative route links include the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), and National Park Service (NPS). For compliance with NEPA and some other federal laws and regulations, the BLM is the lead federal agency. Under both MEPA and NEPA, issues to be addressed in the environmental review process are defined during the public and agency scoping process. The MEPA/NEPA scoping process will proceed following certification of the MSTI proposal by MDEQ.

CHAPTER 2 SCOPING ACTIVITIES

2.1 INTRODUCTION

NorthWestern has conducted an extensive outreach and communication effort in 2007 and 2008. Activities include:

- Meetings held with federal, state, and local agencies; elected officials; and other stakeholders;
- Informal Open Houses allowing members of the public to meet with project team members one-on-one to discuss the latest project information;
- Posting project information on the Internet at www.msti500kv.com;
- Issuing press releases and legal notices about upcoming Open Houses;
- Mailing a newsletter to individuals and other parties having an interest in the project; and
- Other directed mailings, including consultation letters sent to several Native American tribes in Montana.

The federal and state environmental review process under MEPA and NEPA will provide the public with additional opportunities for involvement and for submitting comments.

MFSA Sections 3.3.2 and 3.7.6 a-d state that public attitudes and concerns will be assessed with regard to potential project-specific impacts, and that the analysis will be used in determining the scope of the Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), as required.

An applicant filing a MFSA application must hold at least one public meeting along the alternate routes and the meeting must be accessible to residents potentially affected by the alternative. Under MFSA, the project applicant must have also completed the following:

1. Notified federal, state, and local government agencies of the public meetings.
2. Recorded comments and concerns of public officials and other affected individuals. The comments should reflect concerns about social, economic, taxation, land use changes, and natural features that may be impacted.
3. Prepared an assessment of public attitudes and concerns about potential impacts.
4. Prepared summaries of public meetings, correspondence, personal interviews, and surveys based on representative views of persons residing in the impact zones for project alternatives.
5. Identified issues that may divide communities or cause individual resentment and frustration, and result in public debate, or that relate to a particular concern to landowners and residents in close proximity to project alternatives.

One of the initial tasks of the scoping process was NorthWestern's mailing of scoping letters to federal, state, and local agencies and elected officials in Montana and Idaho in June and July 2007. An example of the agency scoping letter can be found in Exhibit 1. A list of agencies and officials receiving the scoping letter is in Exhibit 2.

2.2 ELECTED OFFICIAL BRIEFINGS

Elected official briefings have been held in each Montana and Idaho county that is crossed by one or more alternative route links. Briefings were also held by request in cities that were near links. The first round of briefings was held in 2007, and a second round is taking place in June and July 2008. In 2007, County Commission briefings were held in five Montana counties and 10 Idaho counties (Table 2.2-1, Figure 2.2-1). In addition, elected official briefings were held in the cities of Anaconda and Deer Lodge, Montana in June 2007 and the city of Lima, Montana in November, 2007.

The purpose of the briefings was to keep elected officials informed about the planning process (e.g., status, elements of the project, and steps in the process) and to maintain relationships that would continue past the planning process. The second round of briefings is also describing the Preferred Route to the elected officials.

Elected official briefings were designed to be brief and to the point. The format for most of the briefings was for NorthWestern and its consultant, POWER Engineers, Inc. (POWER), to give a 15-to-30-minute presentation during a regular session of a County Commission meeting. Prior to the briefings, a fact sheet was presented to each commissioner and to other interested parties at the meeting. A small-scale (1:400,000) map of the MSTI project area was used to illustrate possible route alternatives. Each briefing began with a presentation of purpose and need, the project description, the MFSA process, and the MEPA/NEPA environmental review process, with time allowed afterwards for questions and answers. Commissioners were encouraged to mention any concerns or issues involving the alternative route links. Discussion topics also included suggestions regarding specific aspects of the process and suggestions for the best means for future communication (see Exhibit 3).

Table 2.2-1 Elected Official Briefings in Montana and Idaho

Location	Round 1 Date	Round 2 Date
MONTANA		
Broadwater County (Townsend)	June 11, 2007	June 9, 2008
Jefferson County (Boulder)	June 12, 2007	June 17, 2008
City of Butte-Silver Bow County	June 13, 2007	June 18, 2008
Madison County (Virginia City)	June 18, 2007	June 10, 2008
City of Anaconda-Deer Lodge County	June 22, 2007	June 10, 2008
Beaverhead County (Dillon)	June 26, 2007	June 16, 2008
City of Deer Lodge	June 28, 2007	--
City of Lima	November 26, 2007	June 9, 2008
IDAHO		
Clark County (Dubois)	August 1, 2007	July 14, 2008
Bonneville County (Idaho Falls)	August 14, 2007	July 29, 2008
Bingham County (Blackfoot)	August 15, 2007	July 8, 2008
Minidoka County (Rupert)	August 20, 2007	July 7, 2008
Jerome County (Jerome)	August 21, 2007	June 24, 2008
Power County (American Falls)	September 10, 2007	July 28, 2008
Lincoln County (Shoshone)	September 10, 2007	July 28, 2008
Butte County (Arco)	September 24, 2007	June 23, 2008
Jefferson County (Rigby)	September 24, 2007	June 23, 2008
Blaine County (Hailey, Carey)	October 9, 2007	July 15, 2008

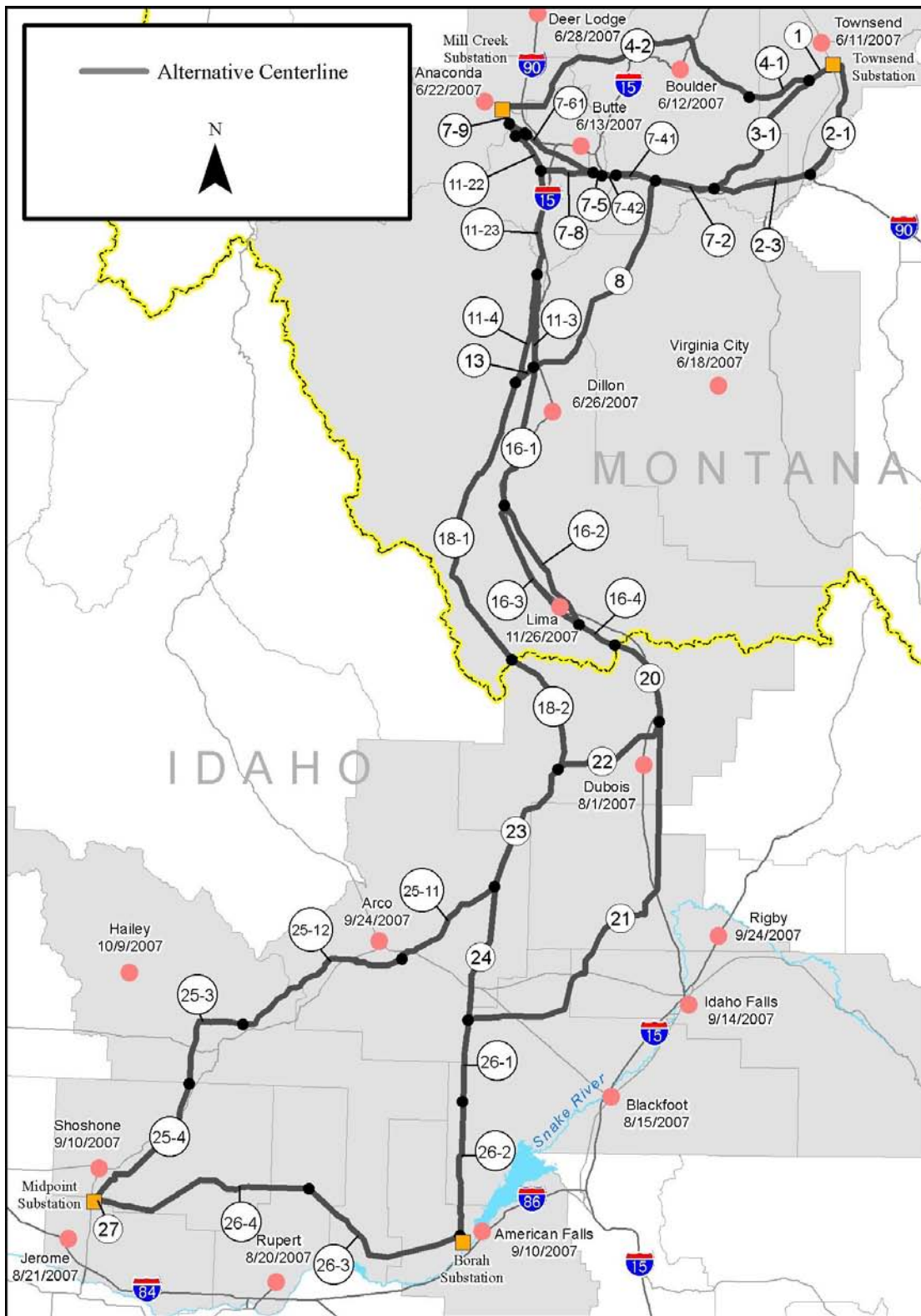


Figure 2.2-1 Locations of Elected Official Briefings (Round 1) in Montana and Idaho

2.3 AGENCY MEETINGS

Individual or, where possible, joint agency meetings were held with federal, state, and a few local agencies in Montana and Idaho (Table 2.3-1). The format for agency meetings ranged from the briefing style used with elected officials (see Section 2.2) to formal presentations following a pre-determined agenda. Meeting summaries were prepared following each meeting. Table 2.3-1 does not include one-on-one meetings by NorthWestern or POWER technical staff with agency resource specialists in the two states. In addition, there were email and written communications between the NorthWestern/POWER team and agency staff. These are listed in Table 2.3-2. Communications among individual resource specialists from NorthWestern, POWER, and agencies are not listed in the table.

Table 2.3-1 Agency Meetings in Montana and Idaho

Agency	Date
Federal Agencies	
BLM, Idaho State Office	September 13, 2007
BLM, Upper Snake Field Office	September 11, 2007
USFS, Helena National Forest	September 18, 2007
USFS, Helena National Forest	November 14, 2007
INL, DOE Idaho Operations Office	November 28, 2007
Montana State Agencies	
Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (MFWP)	September 17, 2007
Interagency	
Helena Interagency Meeting BLM, Montana State Office, USFS, Northern Region, USFS, Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest, Montana Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ), Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (MDNRC), MFWP, Region 3	March 22, 2007
Butte Interagency Meeting BLM, Butte Field Office, USFS, Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest, MFWP	September 17, 2007
Boise Interagency Meeting BLM, Idaho State Office, USFS - Region 4, USFS, Caribou- Targhee National Forest, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Agricultural Research Service, U.S. Sheep Experiment Station, USFWS, Idaho Office of Energy Resources (IOER), IDL, Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (IDEQ), Idaho Department of Agriculture (IDA), Idaho Department of Water Resources (ISWR), IOSC	November 1, 2007
Helena Interagency Meeting USFS, Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest, BLM, Montana State Office, MDEQ, MDNRC, Trust Land Management Division	November 14, 2007
Craters of the Moon Interagency Meeting NPS-Crater of the Moon National Monument, BLM, Shoshone Field Office	February 5, 2008

Agency	Date
Twin Falls Interagency Meeting BLM, Idaho State Office, BLM, Shoshone Field Office, BLM, Burley Field Office, BLM Twin Falls District, NPD-Craters of the Moon National Monument, IDEQ	June 4, 2008
Butte Interagency Meeting BLM, Montana State Office, BLM, Idaho Falls District, BLM Butte Field Office, USFS Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest, MDEQ	June 5, 2008

Table 2.3-2 Agency Communications in Montana and Idaho

Agency	Date	Format
FEDERAL AGENCIES		
Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Montana State Office	June 26, 2007	Letter
BLM, Butte Field Office	July, 2007	Letter
BLM, Dillon Field Office	July 9, 2007	Letter
BLM, Dillon Field Office	July 11, 2007	Letter
BLM, Dillon Field Office	February 19, 2008	Letter
BLM, Dillon Field Office	March 26, 2008	Letter
BLM, Dillon Field Office	March 27, 2008	Letter
BLM, Dillon Field Office	April 15, 2008	Letter
BLM, Shoshone Field Office	August 9, 2007	Open House Comment
Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), Montana Area Office	July 5, 2007	Letter
BOR, Snake River Area Office	August 16, 2007	Letter
National Park Service (NPS), Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve	August 22, 2007	Letter
U.S. Forest Service (USFS), Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest	July 5, 2007	Letter
USFS, Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest	July 11, 2007	Letter
DOE, Idaho Operations Office	September 10, 2007	Letter
Idaho National Laboratory (INL)	August 30, 2007	E-mail
INL	September 5, 2007	Letter
USFWS, Snake River Fish and Wildlife Office	August 15, 2007	Letter
MONTANA STATE AGENCIES		
Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (MFWP)	July 9, 2007	Letter
Montana Public Service Commission (MPSC)	September 14, 2007	Letter
MONTANA LOCAL GOVERNMENTS		
Town of Lima	January 14, 2008	Letter
IDAHO STATE AGENCIES		
Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (IDEQ)	August 13, 2007	Letter
Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG)	August 16, 2007	Letter
Idaho Department of Lands (IDL)	August 15, 2007	Letter
Idaho State Historical Society (ISHS)	August 16, 2007	Letter
Idaho Transportation Department	August 1, 2007	Letter
IDAHO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS		
Blaine County Commissioners	January 15, 2008	Letter
Blaine County Planning/Zoning/Building Department	November 26, 2007	Letter

Agency	Date	Format
IDAHO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS (cont.)		
Clark County Economic Development Office	February 29, 2008	Letter
INTERAGENCY		
Sage Grouse Southwest Montana Local Working Group (BLM, USFS, Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), MFWP, MDNRC)	September 14, 2007	Letter
BLM, Dillon Field Office with BLM, Butte Field Office, BLM, Upper Snake Field Office, Western Montana Resource Advisory Council (BLM, Butte Field Office), USFS, Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest, USFS, Caribou-Targhee National Forest, USFWS, Montana Ecological Services Field Office, USFWS, Eastern Idaho Field Office, MFWP, Region 3, IDFG, Upper Snake Region, Beaverhead County Commission	December 10, 2007	Letter

2.4 PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE MEETINGS

Public Open Houses were held in 11 cities in 2007 and 2008, six in Montana (Whitehall, Townsend, Ennis, Dillon, Anaconda, and Butte) and five in Idaho (Arco, Idaho Falls, Shoshone, Carey, and Aberdeen) (Figure 2.4-1) (Table 2.4-1).

The Open House meeting format used for the MSTI project is a well established format for distributing information, discussing issues on a face-to-face basis, and soliciting comments and issues important to meeting attendees. Open House locations were selected based on the size of the meeting room; if kitchen and restrooms were available on site; if the site had adequate parking and was well lighted for evening meetings; if the public was familiar with the location; and if the location had been previously used for public meetings.

Information about the location, date, and attendance for each Open House is presented in Table 2.4-1. Locations of Open House meetings are shown in Figure 2.4-1.

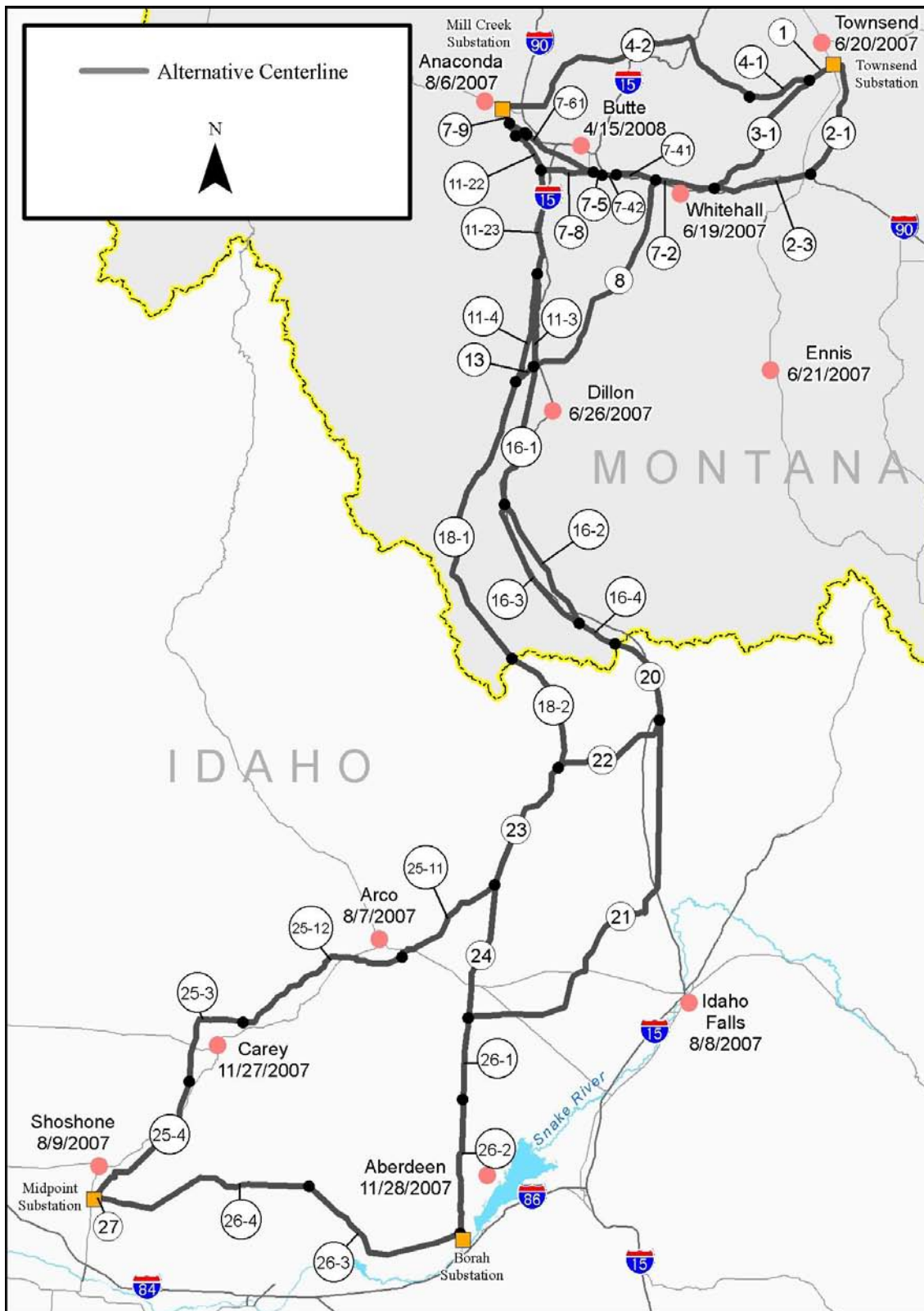


Figure 2.4-1 Locations of Public Open Houses in Montana and Idaho

Table 2.4-1 Public Open Houses in Montana and Idaho

Location	Date	Attendance
MONTANA		
Whitehall, Jefferson County	June 19, 2007	20
Townsend, Broadwater County	June 20, 2007	20
Ennis, Madison County	June 21, 2007	19
Dillon, Beaverhead County	June 26, 2007	17
Anaconda, Deer Lodge County	August 6, 2007	33
Butte, Silver Bow County	April 16, 2008	32
SUBTOTAL		141
IDAHO		
Arco, Butte County	August 7, 2007	13
Idaho Falls, Bonneville County	August 8, 2007	7
Shoshone, Lincoln County	August 9, 2007	11
Carey, Blaine County	November 27, 2007	64
Aberdeen, Power County	November 28, 2007	11
SUBTOTAL		108
TOTAL		249

The Open Houses were announced in legal notices published in local newspapers (Table 2.4-2) and in additional advertisements in the same newspapers (see Section 2.5.1). Legal notices are provided in Exhibit 5.

Prior to each Open House, informational materials (e.g., Project Fact Sheet, see Exhibit 6) were developed for use as handouts, to attendees, for conducting media briefings and for advertising. Meeting places and dates were also posted on the project website (see Section 2.5.2).

Attendees were first asked to sign in (Exhibit 7). The meetings were arranged in a walk-through presentation with stations located throughout the viewing corridor. The stations were divided as follows:

1. Welcome (Board #1)
Comments
2. Purpose and Need (Boards #2 - #5)
Comments
3. Engineering (Boards #6 - #10)
Comments
4. Environment (Boards #11- #15)
Comments
5. Interactive Geographic Information System (GIS)
6. Comment Table; Opportunities for Public Involvement (Board #16)

Exhibit 8 contains copies of the presentation boards.

The welcome table was used to greet attendees and secure their names on a sign-in sheet (Exhibit 7). The attendees were given a fact sheet about the project (Exhibit 6) and a comment form (see Exhibit 9). The attendees were informed that they could either complete the comment form at any time during the meeting or mail or fax the completed form at a later date.

The second station consisted of a group of boards that explained MSTI's purpose and need, project schedule, and project description. This station included a small-scale (1:400,000) map of alternative routes. Following this group of boards, there was a comment board where project staff could record verbal comments from the meeting attendees.

The third station consisted of group of boards that explained project engineering, followed by a comment board.

The fourth station was a group of boards that explained the environmental process, followed by a small-scale map (1:400,000).

The fifth station was the Interactive GIS Workstation. The Interactive GIS Workstation at the Open Houses allowed the operator to access a geospatial database of information about the MSTI study area. Public input was captured by interactively linking each person's comments to a precise point, area, or linear feature on a detailed map of the project area. The site-specific maps generated by the process could be printed and handed to the attendees.

The sixth and final station was the comment table, where attendees could fill out their comment forms (Exhibit 9), followed by a board that explained the ongoing public participation process.

Table 2.4-2 Open House Legal Notices

Open House Meeting	Date of Meeting	Newspaper	Date of Publication
MONTANA			
Whitehall, Jefferson County	June 19, 2007	Three Forks Herald	June 13, 2007
		Whitehall Ledger	June 13, 2007
		Montana Standard	June 17, 2007
		Montana Standard	June 18, 2007
		Dillon Tribune	June 20, 2007
		The Madisonian	June 21, 2007
Townsend, Broadwater County	June 20, 2007	Three Forks Herald	June 13, 2007
		Whitehall Ledger	June 13, 2007
		Montana Standard	June 17, 2007
		Montana Standard	June 18, 2007
		Dillon Tribune	June 20, 2007
		The Madisonian	June 21, 2007
Ennis, Madison County	June 21, 2007	Three Forks Herald	June 13, 2007
		Whitehall Ledger	June 13, 2007
		Montana Standard	June 17, 2007
		Montana Standard	June 18, 2007
		Dillon Tribune	June 20, 2007
		The Madisonian	June 21, 2007
Dillon, Beaverhead County	June 26, 2007	Three Forks Herald	June 13, 2007
		Whitehall Ledger	June 13, 2007
		Montana Standard	June 17, 2007
		Montana Standard	June 18, 2007
		Dillon Tribune	June 20, 2007
		The Madisonian	June 21, 2007
Anaconda, Deer Lodge County	August 6, 2007	Montana Standard	July 25, 2007
Butte, Silver Bow County	April 16, 2008	Montana Standard	April 2, 2008
IDAHO			
Arco, Butte County	August 7, 2007	Wood River Journal	July 25, 2007
		Arco Advertiser	July 26, 2007
		Post Register	July 26, 2007
		Idaho Statesman	July 26, 2007
		Idaho Statesman	August 5, 2007
		Idaho State Journal	July 27, 2007
Idaho Falls, Bonneville County	August 8, 2007	Wood River Journal	July 25, 2007
		Arco Advertiser	July 26, 2007
		Post Register	July 26, 2007
		Idaho Statesman	July 26, 2007
		Idaho Statesman	August 5, 2007
		Idaho State Journal	July 27, 2007
Shoshone, Lincoln County	August 9, 2007	Wood River Journal	July 25, 2007
		Arco Advertiser	July 26, 2007
		Post Register	July 26, 2007
		Idaho Statesman	July 26, 2007
		Idaho Statesman	August 5, 2007
		Idaho State Journal	July 27, 2007
Carey, Blaine County	November 27, 2007	Aberdeen Times	November 21, 2007
		Power County Press	November 21, 2007
		Idaho State Journal	November 25, 2007
Aberdeen, Power County	November 28, 2007	Aberdeen Times	November 21, 2007
		Power County Press	November 21, 2007
		Idaho State Journal	November 25, 2007

2.5 PUBLIC COMMUNICATION

Public communication tools were also used to elicit public comments, including:

- Media Contacts
- Website Development
- Mailings
- Newsletters

2.5.1 MEDIA CONTACTS

A variety of press releases and public meeting notices with fact sheets (Exhibit 6) were used to announce the MSTI project. Interviews were also conducted with the press.

One press release was made prior to each of the Public Open Houses. These were issued to local newspapers, television, and radio outlets in both Idaho and Montana. Public service announcements were also issued to air on local television and radio stations.

Another series of press releases will be issued prior to filing the MFSA application with MDEQ.

2.5.2 MSTI WEBSITE

A project website (www.msti500kv.com) was established that contained information and data specific to MSTI. Materials produced for the public (e.g., maps, Open House presentation boards) are included, as well.

The organization of the pages on the web site is:

- About the Project
 - Project Overview
 - Benefits of MSTI
 - Options to Stay Informed
 - About NorthWestern Energy
- What's New
 - Current News
 - Open Season Information
 - Archived News by Data
- Routes/Maps
 - Alternative Routes
- Environmental Review
 - Review Process
 - EIS Process
 - Preliminary Issues
 - Environmental Studies
 - Open House Boards
- Project Design
 - Engineering Requirements

- System Studies
- Project Timeline
- Open House Boards
- Public Outreach
 - Public Information
 - Open Houses
 - Elected Official Briefings
 - Public Outreach Completed
 - Open House Boards
 - Public Outreach Documents
 - Comment Form

The project website was launched in June 5, 2007 and its most recent redesign was on June 11, 2008. Table 2.5-1 summarizes the numbers of sessions per month. A “session” is a series of hits to a site over a specific time period by a visitor. A “hit” is any successful request to a webserver from a visitor’s browser. The number of sessions is a better measure of website traffic than the number of hits because a single session by one visitor may include numerous hits.

There have been a total of 2,004 sessions (September 2007 through June 2008) and 123,140 hits (June 2007 through June 2008) (Information on the number of sessions is not available prior to September 2007). The average was 154 sessions per month and 5.23 sessions per day. The average length of a session was 5.17 minutes. Of the 2,004 sessions, there were 1,116 unique visitors (i.e., some visitors visited the site more than once).

Table 2.5-1 MSTI Website Traffic

Month	Sessions	Hits
June 2007	No Data	18,168
July 2007	No Data	11,407
August 2007	No Data	14,956
September 2007	27	6,909
October 2007	241	7,459
November 2007	241	8,534
December 2007	200	7,275
January 2008	248	9,082
February 2008	160	6,032
March 2008	188	7,370
April 2008	273	9,530
May 2008	261	8,952
June 2008*	165	7,466
TOTAL	2,004	123,140

*Through June 24, 2008
Source: Pyron Technologies 2008

2.5.3 NEWSLETTER

A project newsletter (Exhibit 10) was developed and mailed or emailed on April 29, 2008 using the project mailing list (Exhibit 11). The newsletter, *MSTI Project Update*, contained information on:

- A brief description of the project.
- Purpose of the project
- Benefits of MSTI.
- 2008 MSTI milestones and activities, including a project timeline.
- Milestones that occurred in 2007.
- Acronyms

A total of 442 newsletters were mailed out to individuals and agencies and 52 newsletters were e-mailed. A copy of the newsletter can be found in Exhibit 10.

2.5.4 MAILINGS

A mailing list database (Exhibit 11) was compiled to provide interested parties (via postal service and/or e-mail) with information about the status of planning, future meetings, and other project details. The mailing list was updated following Public Open Houses, receipt of comments from the project website, and other events at which individuals expressed interest in the project.

A special mailing was used to target one specific audience. Postcards were sent by NorthWestern on November 8, 2007 to 281 farmers and landowners in Bingham and Power Counties, Idaho who were on a mailing list provided by the American Falls-Aberdeen Ground Water District. The post card requested their attendance at the Public Open House to be held in Aberdeen, Idaho on November 28, 2007.

Also, a special mailing was used as the initial step in tribal consultation (Section 2.6).

2.6 TRIBAL CONSULTATION

Under MFSA and as outlined in Circular MFSA-2, NorthWestern is required to provide:

“documentation that consultation has occurred with the SHPO, affected state and federal agencies, or tribes regarding any affected cultural sites, impacts, and mitigation (3.7(14)(d)).”

In June 2008, NorthWestern sent letters to several Native American tribes in Montana to inform them of the MSTI project; to provide notice that NorthWestern would be submitting an application to MDEQ for certification of the proposed transmission line as required by MFSA; and to initiate MFSA tribal consultation. NorthWestern also requested information that the tribes would be willing to share on unique, special, ethnographic, or archaeological resources or areas in or near the Preferred Route and alternatives. The tribes contacted were:

Blackfeet Tribe
Browning, Montana

Chippewa Cree Tribe
Box Elder, Montana

The Crow Tribe of Indians
Crow Agency, Montana

Gros Ventre and Assiniboine Tribes
Harlem, Montana

Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes
Pablo, Montana

Letters were sent to the tribal chairman and to the Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO) if the tribe had a THPO.

Responses received by NorthWestern from the tribes will be forwarded to MDEQ as part of the MFSA application.

CHAPTER 3 SCOPING COMMENTS

This chapter contains information on the scoping comments received through different venues (e.g., elected official briefings, agency meetings, Public Open Houses). The comments are separated into those from Montana (Section 3.1) and those from Idaho (Section 3.2).

3.1 MONTANA

3.1.1 ELECTED OFFICIAL BRIEFINGS QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

Thirty-nine (39) substantive questions and issues were raised by elected officials in six of the first round of briefings in Montana (Table 3.1-1). Specific comments and issues are included in Exhibit 1 and are summarized below.

Table 3.1-1 Questions and Comments at Round 1 Elected Official Briefings in Montana

Location	Date	Questions/ Comments	Specific Comments in Exhibit 1
Broadwater County (Townsend)	June 11, 2007	4	Table 3-1
Jefferson County (Boulder,	June 12, 2007	6	Table 3-2
City of Butte-Silver Bow County	June 13, 2007	9	Table 3-3
Madison County (Virginia City)	June 18, 2007	7	Table 3-4
City of Anaconda-Deer Lodge County	June 22, 2007	No Data	
Beaverhead County (Dillon)	June 26, 2007	6	Table 3-5
City of Deer Lodge	June 28, 2007	No Data	
City of Lima	November 26, 2007	7	Table 3-6
TOTAL		39	

The general topics of the comments received from Montana elected officials included:

- Location of the transmission line, connection points, substations and other project facilities
- Whether a preferred route has been selected.
- Project timing.
- Relationship to other projects.
- Whether wind power will be able to tie in to the transmission line
- The nature of wind in Montana.
- Financial impact to the county.
- Tax consequences.
- Effects on electric bills.
- Financial stability of NorthWestern
- Source of funding.
- Stability and viability of the project.
- Mileage of transmission line within county.
- Interference with cell towers.
- Weed problems caused by access roads.

- Proximity of the project to subdivisions.
- Electromagnetic Fields (EMF)
- Using garbage as energy.

3.1.2 AGENCY MEETING COMMENTS AND LETTERS

Federal and state agency officials and staff in Montana had numerous opportunities to provide input on the MSTI project. As shown in Table 2.3-1, there were a number of meetings held with agencies, either in joint meetings with other agencies, in agency-specific meetings with NorthWestern representatives, or in individual meetings between resource specialists. Also, agencies submitted comment letters on several occasions (Table 2.3-2).

Agency comments and letters are summarized in a comments and responses database. Copies of agency letters are included in Exhibit 4.

3.1.3 PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE COMMENTS

Comments received during the five Public Open Meetings in Montana were submitted in writing on comment forms during or after the meetings, verbally at comment stations, digitally on interactive GIS forms, and by hand at the meetings (Table 3.1-2). A total of 105 comments were received during Open Houses in Montana.

Table 3.1-2 Comments Received During Open Houses in Montana

Location	Date	Comment Forms	Verbal	Interactive GIS	Hand- Delivered	Total
Whitehall, Jefferson County	June 19, 2007	3	7	5	0	15
Townsend, Broadwater County	June 20, 2007	1	4	7	0	12
Ennis, Madison County	June 21, 2007	2	4	9	0	15
Dillon, Beaverhead County	June 26, 2007	1	13	11	0	25
Anaconda, Deer Lodge County	August 6, 2007	2	11	6	3	22
Butte, Silver Bow County	August 16, 2007	4	11	1	0	16
TOTAL		13	50	39	3	105

Exhibit 9 contains copies of the written comments received. Comments received during Montana Open Houses are summarized below:

- Opposition to or support for specific alternative route links.
- Avoiding irrigation pivots.
- Concern about weeds and about gates being left open
- Wetlands.
- Proximity to Toston Dam.
- Proximity to the historic town of Radersburg.
- Proximity to subdivision developments.
- Protecting viewsheds.
- Protecting wildlife and preserving wildlife corridors.
- Elk, sage grouse, bald eagle, carnivores, golden eagle, falcon, sandhill crane, songbirds, bats, swans.
- A heron rookery.

- Native vegetation
- Preserving open space, recreation resources, and private conservation easements.
- Parallel existing transmission lines.
- Protecting the local economy.
- Private airports.
- Need to review a revised Growth Management Plan.
- Property values.
- EMF.
- Acquisition and staging of fire equipment.

3.1.4 OTHER COMMENTS RECEIVED

Apart from the Open Houses, elected official briefings, and agency meetings, a number of comments and issues were received in other ways:

- Website e-mails
- Mailed or faxed comment forms
- Mailed or faxed letters
- Mailed or faxed petitions
- Verbal comments recorded on flip charts during the meetings

A total of 207 comments or questions were received from Montana residents via e-mail, fax, and through the mail. A large portion (166 out of 207) were signatures on the Hadley Park petition opposing one alternative route link in Montana. Copies of comments are in Exhibit 9 and are also included in a scoping comments database.

3.1.5 RESPONSES TO COMMENTS

Questions or comments posed at an Open House, during an elected official briefing, or during agency meeting were answered immediately. Substantive questions and comments received through the mail, by fax, or by e-mail were responded to by letter or by e-mail. Responses are included in the scoping comments database.

3.2 IDAHO

3.2.1 ELECTED OFFICIAL BRIEFINGS QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

Sixty-seven (67) substantive questions and issues were raised by County Commissioners from 10 Round 1 briefings in Idaho (Table 3.2-1). Specific comments and issues are included in Exhibit 1 and are summarized below.

Table 3.2-1 Questions and Comments at Round 1 Elected Official Briefings in Idaho

Location	Date	Questions/ Comments	Specific Comments in Exhibit 1
Clark County (Dubois)	August 1, 2007	4	Table 3-7
Bonneville County (Idaho Falls)	August 14, 2007	9	Table 3-8
Bingham County (Blackfoot)	August 15, 2007	11	Table 3-9
Minidoka County (Rupert)	August 20, 2007	5	Table 3-10
Jerome County (Jerome)	August 21, 2007	5	Table 3-11
Power County (American Falls)	September 10, 2007	5	Table 3-12
Lincoln County (Shoshone)	September 10, 2007	6	Table 3-13
Butte County (Arco)	September 24, 2007	9	Table 3-14
Jefferson County (Rigby)	September 24, 2007	4	Table 3-15
Blaine County (Hailey)	October 9, 2007	9	Table 3-16
TOTAL		67	

The general topics of the comments received from Idaho elected officials included:

- Location of the transmission line and connection points.
- Distance from other transmission lines.
- Can existing transmission line routes be followed?
- Can more lines be added to the structures?
- Effects on existing substations.
- Is there a preferred route?
- Mileage of transmission line within county.
- Source of energy.
- Can wind energy, nuclear and other projects tie in to the transmission line?
- Who are the end users?
- Is Idaho Power a participant in MSTI?
- Need for additional Open Houses.
- Dealing with landowners.
- Sage grouse.
- Avoid irrigation pivots.
- Crossing Idaho National Laboratory (INL).
- Crossing Indian reservations.
- Visual impacts on Craters of the Moon and Highway 20 scenic corridor.
- Appearance of towers.
- Tax consequences.
- Effects on electric bills.
- EMF.

3.2.2 AGENCY MEETING COMMENTS AND LETTERS

Federal and state agency officials and staff in Idaho had numerous opportunities to provide input on the MSTI project. As shown in Table 2.3-1, there were a number of meetings held with agencies, either in joint meetings with other agencies, in agency-specific meetings with NorthWestern representatives, or in individual meetings between resource specialists. Also, agencies submitted comment letters on several occasions (Table 2.3-3).

Agency comments and letters are summarized in the comments and responses database. Copies of agency letters are included in Exhibit 4.

3.2.3 PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE COMMENTS

Comments received during the five Public Open Meetings in Idaho were submitted in writing on comment forms during or after the meetings, verbally at comment stations, digitally on interactive GIS forms, and by hand at the meetings (Table 3.2-2). A total of 44 comments were received during Open Houses in Idaho.

Table 3.2-2 Comments Received During Open Houses in Idaho

Location	Date	Comment Forms	Verbal	Interactive GIS	Hand-Delivered	Total
Arco, Butte County	August 7, 2007	3	2	5	0	10
Idaho Falls, Bonneville County	August 8, 2007	0	2	0	0	2
Shoshone, Lincoln County	August 9, 2007	0	2	2	1	5
Carey, Blaine County	November 27, 2007	4	11	2	0	17
Aberdeen, Power County	November 28, 2007	2	0	8	0	10
TOTAL		9	17	17	1	44

Exhibit 9 contains copies of the written comments received, and public comments are also included in a database. Comments received during Idaho Open Houses are summarized below:

- Opposition to or support for specific alternative route links
- Proximity to highways and airports
- Prefer DC over AC line
- Avoid Craters of the Moon National Park
- Avoid Lava Lakes area
- Preference for using existing corridors
- Antelope movement corridors
- Recreation resources
- Nature preserve near Silver Creek

3.2.4 OTHER COMMENTS RECEIVED

Apart from the Open Houses, elected official briefings, and agency meetings in Idaho, a number of comments and issues were received in other ways:

- Website e-mails
- Verbal comments recorded on flip charts during the meetings
- Comment forms and letters mailed to NorthWestern.

A total of 21 comments or questions were received from Idaho residents via e-mail, letters or verbally. Exhibit 9 contains copies of the written comments received, and public comments are also included in a database.

3.2.5 RESPONSES TO COMMENTS

Questions or comments posed at an Open House, during an elected official briefing, or during agency meeting were answered immediately. Substantive questions and comments received through the mail, by fax, or by e-mail were responded to by letter or by e-mail.

CHAPTER 4 ANALYSIS

This chapter analyzes the comments submitted by the public and by elected officials during the scoping process. Comments were categorized into eight broad categories:

- Social - General comments on how the proposed project could change lifestyle.
- Economic – Comments primarily related to property taxes and utility rates.
- Human Environment – Comments addressing agricultural uses, conservation easements, historic buildings or communities, transportation, utilities, visual impacts.
- Natural Environment – Comments mentioning plants, wildlife, and habitat.
- Engineering – Questions regarding the specific design of the proposed transmission line.
- Location – Comments that expressed concerns about specific routes or proposed alternative routes.
- Timing – Comments related to the project schedule.
- Miscellaneous – Requests for additional information or more detailed maps.

4.1 MONTANA

Comments or questions made by elected officials during five elected official briefings in Montana are categorized in Table 4.1-1. The comments, in order of frequency, are categorized as follows:

Economic	38	percent
Engineering	19	percent
Location	13	percent
Miscellaneous	13	percent
Human Environment	9	percent
Natural Environment	6	percent
Timing	3	percent
Social	0	percent

Table 4.1-1 Montana Elected Official Comments by Category*

COUNTY	CATEGORY								TOTAL
	Social	Economic	Human Environ.	Natural Environ.	Engineering	Location	Timing	Misc.	
Jefferson		1			1	1	1		4
Broadwater		2	1	1	1			1	6
Madison		4	2		1			2	9
Beaverhead		3			2	2			7
Butte-Silver Bow		2		1	1	1		1	6
TOTAL	0	12	3	2	6	4	1	4	32

* Information not available for Anaconda, Deer Lodge, or Lima elected officials

Comments or questions made by the public during five Open House meetings in Montana are categorized in Table 4.1-2. The comments, in order of frequency, are categorized as follows:

Natural Environment	33	percent
Location	30	percent
Human Environment	20	percent
Miscellaneous	9	percent
Economic	6	percent
Social	2	percent
Timing	0	percent
Engineering	0	percent

Table 4.1-2 Montana Open House Comments by Category

COUNTY*	CATEGORY								TOTAL
	Social	Economic	Human Environ.	Natural Environ.	Engineering	Location	Timing	Misc.	
Jefferson			4	3		3		4	14
Broadwater	1	1	5			4		1	12
Madison		1	3	5		3		3	15
Beaverhead			4	16		4			24
Deer Lodge	1	3	1	5		12			22
TOTAL	2	5	17	29	0	26	0	8	87

* Information not available for Butte-Silver Bow County Public Open House

Comments or questions submitted by the public in Montana outside of the Open House meetings are categorized in Table 4.1-3. These include a single petition that contained 166 signatures that expressed opposition to the location of one route alternative. The remaining comments, in order of frequency, are categorized as follows:

Miscellaneous	33	percent
Location	27	percent
Natural Environment	18	percent
Economic	12	percent
Human Environment	9	percent
Social	0	percent
Timing	0	percent
Engineering	0	percent

By combining all comments from Montana (excluding the petition), they can be categorized, in order of frequency, as follows:

Location	26	percent
Natural Environment	24	percent
Human Environment	15	percent
Miscellaneous	15	percent
Economic	14	percent
Engineering	4	percent
Social	1	percent
Timing	1	percent

Table 4.1-3 Other Montana Comments Received by Category

COUNTY	CATEGORY								TOTAL
	Social	Economic	Human Environ.	Natural Environ.	Engineering	Location	Timing	Misc.	
Comment Forms		4	1	2		1			8
Letters				2				1	3
Verbal									0
E-Mails			2	2		8		10	22
Petitions						1 (166)*			1 (166)*
TOTAL	0	4	3	6	0	10 (175)*	0	11	34 (199)*

*One petition with 166 signatures

4.2 IDAHO

Comments or questions made by elected officials during ten elected official briefings in Idaho are categorized in Table 4.2-1. The comments, in order of frequency, are categorized as follows:

Engineering	34	percent
Human Environment	21	percent
Miscellaneous	13	percent
Location	12	percent
Economic	9	percent
Timing	4	percent
Social	4	percent
Natural Environment	1	Percent

Table 4.2-1 Idaho Elected Official Comments by Category

COUNTY	CATEGORY								TOTAL
	Social	Economic	Human Environ.	Natural Environ.	Engineering	Location	Timing	Misc.	
Clark					4				4
Bonneville			4		3	1		1	9
Bingham		1	4		4		1	1	11
Minidoka	1	1	1		1	1			5
Jerome			1		2	1		1	5
Power						1	2	2	5
Lincoln	1	1	3			1			6
Butte		2		1	3	2		1	9
Jefferson	1	1				1		1	4
Blaine		0	1	0	6			2	9
TOTAL	3	6	14	1	23	8	3	9	67

Comments or questions made by the public during ten Open House meetings in Idaho are categorized in Table 4.2-2. The comments, in order of frequency, are categorized as follows:

Location	35	percent
Human Environment	18	percent
Miscellaneous	18	percent
Natural Environment	12	percent
Engineering	12	percent
Economic	6	percent
Social	0	percent
Timing	0	percent

Table 4.2-2 Idaho Open House Comments by Category

COUNTY	CATEGORY								TOTAL
	Social	Economic	Human Environ.	Natural Environ.	Engineering	Location	Timing	Misc.	
Clark		1	1		2	4		2	10
Bonneville			1	1					2
Bingham			1	1		2		1	5
Minidoka									0
Jerome									0
Power									0
Lincoln									0
Butte									0
Jefferson									0
Blaine									0
TOTAL	0	1	3	2	2	6	0	3	17

Comments or questions submitted by the public in Idaho outside of the Open House meetings are categorized in Table 4.2-3. The comments, in order of frequency, are categorized as follows:

Miscellaneous	37.5	percent
Location	12.5	percent
Timing	12.5	percent
Engineering	12.5	percent
Economic	12.5	percent
Human Environment	12.5	percent
Natural Environment	0	percent
Social	0	percent

By combining all comments from Idaho, they can be categorized, in order of frequency, as follows:

Engineering	28	percent
Human Environment	20	percent
Miscellaneous	16	percent
Location	16	percent
Economic	9	percent
Timing	4	percent
Natural Environment	3	percent
Social	3	Percent

Table 4.2-3 Other Idaho Comments Received by Category

COUNTY	CATEGORY								TOTAL
	Social	Economic	Human Environ.	Natural Environ.	Engineering	Location	Timing	Misc.	
Comment Forms									0
Letters									0
Verbal		1	1		1		1	3	7
E-Mails						1			1
Petitions									0
TOTAL	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	3	8